

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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MASONIC SECRECY

... I have estimated that during the past two centuries some 200,000 Masonic books have been published in all the languages, yet that vast body of writing maintains a silence about many things. These are such things as a man does or does not do; are not theories, or thoughts, or ideas, or abstract generalizations, but are practices, and these practices are observed and experienced by every Mason. Masonic secrecy is the name for that body of practices. You can stand aside to watch Masonic secrecy at work.

My last specimen will be a subject beloved of Masonic orators—it would not be an exaggeration to say than in Proceedings, books, booklets and magazines you might find a thousand orations on it; it is a subject which usually is expressed in some form of the words; "What is Freemasonry's Place in the World?" And in the larger number of these orations the subject is discussed as if it were an abstract generalization, a matter of ideas or theories, and one on which an orator may express what orators love to call their own "views."

My thesis here would contend that this also is a subject which can be defined or described only by observation of practices and happenings, each of which is visible to the physical eye.

I write in a city in which are three flourishing lodges. If you were to attend the communication of one of those lodges tonight, you would not hear a member deliver a political speech, nor would the Master instruct his members for whom to vote at the coming election. If the chairman of the constituency committee were to call tomorrow night a meeting of his committee, you would not find the Master in attendance—at least not as Worshipful Master.

The lodge would not send out any committee of its own to instruct the pastor of any church in what he was to do with his church. Lodge officers would not sit in with the next meeting of the public library board, or with the board of any bank, nor would the lodge send instructions to the local officers of the state militia, or instructions to the members of the State or National Congress.

The lodge knows clearly its own place, remains exclusively within that place, refuses to take the place of anything else in the community; it keeps within its own place by means of its own practices, by what it does or refuses to do, and that body of such practices is itself the answer to the question as to what is Freemasonry's place in the world.

(H. L. Haywood)

WE ARE SEVENTY-FIVE

The year 1950 is an important year in the annals of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. We have now reached our seventy-fifth anniversary and for several months—ever since our last Annual Communication—a special committee has been laying plans out on the Trestle-board of Grand Lodge. The function of this committee is to work out a comprehensive program for our Annual Communication in June.

A great deal of progress has been made. Some parts of the scheme have been finalized while other parts are undergoing the touch of the Master Craftsman in order to make the whole plan one to be long remembered by the brethren of today. We are hopeful that a more definite announcement with details will be available for release before our next issue goes to press.

An event of this nature should carry its appeal to every brother holding membership in a lodge under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. To the brother sojourning in the Province but who holds membership far removed from Manitoba there is a place for him in our day of celebration and we believe he will have a place in his heart to join with us in our commemoration.

This year, for the reasons briefly outlined above, brings a heavy responsibility to the men who hold elective offices in our several lodges. They owe it to their members to be present at and register their attendance when the Annual Communication opens. It will be learned when the program is announced that every lodge will find opportunity to participate in some of our services even at long distance, but let us wait the details when completed.

Some words I have used previously come to mind as I sound this call and they are appropriate at this time. In all our lodges we need a day of commemoration in tribute to the multitude of unknown Masons, forgotten of fame and unsung by poetry, who by love and loyalty built their lives into the Temple and left only their marks upon it. Their names are lost, save in the memory of God, and they sleep in the indistinguishable dust, with no hope or record by man; they were content to live in the work they have wrought and the good they did. They were the real builders of the Temple, as it stands in the sunlight, or touched by the sweet mysticism of the night; into their labors, we of the Craft have entered and because of their faithfulness, we have a finer, a firmer faith.

Our anniversary ceremonies have a true significance. We shall honor the pioneer Craftsmen who brought the Grand Lodge of Manitoba into being seventy-five years ago. They bequeathed to succeeding generations a great heritage and we shall honor their work with faithfulness when the day of anniversary dawns.

May we find every worshipful Master at his post, ready and vigilant to discharge the duties of his high office.

A SERIOUS THOUGHT

What has Masonry to teach us about immortality? Instead of making an argument, it presents a picture, the oldest, if not the greatest, drama in the world—the better to make men feel what no words can ever tell. It shows us the tragedy of life in its most dismal hour; the forces of evil, so cunning yet so stupid, tempting the soul to treachery—even to the ultimate degradation of saving life by giving up all that makes it worth our time to live. It shows us a noble and true man smitten, in the moment of his loftiest service to man.

It is a picture so true to the bitter, old and haggard reality of this dark world that it makes the soul stand still in dismay. Then, out of the shadow there rises, like a beautiful white star, that in man which is most akin to God—his love of truth, his loyalty to the ideal, his willingness to go down into the night of death, if only virtue may live and shine like a pulse of fire in the evening sky.

Here is the ultimate and final witness of the divinity and immortality of the soul—the heroic, death-defying moral valor of the human soul! No being capable of such a sublime sacrifice need fear death or the grave.

"What has the soul to lose
By worlds on worlds destroyed."

It is the old eternal paradox—he who gives his all for the sake of truth shall find it all anew. And there Masonry rests the case, assured that since there is that in man which makes him hold to the moral ideal against the brute forces of the world; that which prompts him to pay the last full measure of devotion for the sanctity of his soul; the God who made him in His own image will not let him sleep in the dust. Higher vision it is not given us to see in the dim country of this world; deeper truth we do not need to know.

(Joseph Fort Newton).

ANOTHER QUESTION AND ANSWER

In a question period that followed a Passion Sunday address by Dr. Cadman, before the Men's Conference at the Bedford Branch of the Y.M.C.A. in Brooklyn, the Doctor was asked this question.

"Do you think a person could be a better Christian not belonging to a secret society than if he did, especially where the name of Christ is not permitted on the ritual?"

Dr. Cadman gave the following reply:

That question is aimed at the Masons. I am a Mason and I know Masonry to be a broad-minded, Christ-like institution. Masons are friendly and as a Christian minister I can say that they fear God and are the orchestra of God toward bringing about fraternity, and for that reason I am and shall always remain a Mason.

WIDER BOUNDARIES

For several years the matter of Lodge jurisdiction in the districts adjoining the City of Winnipeg has been a disturbing factor. Some of the lodges positively refused to waive jurisdiction over petitioners while others did so under certain reservations. All this has been ended. At the last Annual Communication of Grand Lodge Section 136 of our Constitution was amended and now reads:

“The territorial jurisdiction of lodges in Greater Winnipeg shall be exclusive within the limits of that area. It shall extend into any neighbouring municipality, as long as no lodge exists there, to a point half-way between the limits of Greater Winnipeg and the nearest lodge in that direction.

“The territorial jurisdiction of a lodge outside Greater Winnipeg, shall extend to lines drawn half-way between its meeting place and those of the nearest lodges in all directions.

“In Greater Winnipeg, cities and towns, where there are two or more lodges, their jurisdiction shall be concurrent.”

In order to understand what “Greater Winnipeg” consists of we refer the reader to Section 2 (N) of the constitution which reads:

“Greater Winnipeg is the aggregate territory contained within the limits of the following corporations in the Province of Manitoba, namely; the City of Winnipeg, the City of St. Boniface, the Town of Tuxedo, and the Municipal Corporations of Assiniboia, Brooklands, Charleswood, Fort Garry, Old Kildonan, East Kildonan, North Kildonan, West Kildonan, St. James and St. Vital.”

This amendment is not generally known to the membership and with this announcement there should be no cause for misunderstanding.

If a brother has a close friend who resides say in St. James or St. Vital or one of the Kildonan's and he wishes to petition any lodge in the area above described he may do so—there is no bann because his residence is outside the geographic boundaries of the lodge he desires to petition. No longer is it necessary to arrange for waiver of jurisdiction when petitions are received from residents in the Greater Winnipeg area.

THE IDEAL FREEMASON

Our Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Brother Chas. E. Cole was one of the principal speakers at the ninth Annual Inter-Provincial Conference of Western Jurisdictions held in Banff, Alta., last September. The subject of his address was “The Ideal Freemason.” We believe many of the brethren will read the concluding part of Brother Cole's message with interest so we pass it on just as he delivered it.

"A candidate should, primarily, enter the Craft because of a favorable opinion pre-conceived of it. Then, if he is of a serious mind and devotes proper attention and study to the essential truths that the Craft offers for the building of a better life, if he endeavors to the best of his ability to build his character, his life, and his actions to conform with these truths, he can become an ideal Freemason, no matter what his rank in Freemasonry or in his ordinary life may be. It is not just given to some to have this opportunity, it is given to all.

"Our Ideal Freemason must be faithful to his word and to his trust. He must be firm to answer and obey. He will seek to improve and cultivate his mind and his morals, not only to be an example to his brethren, but also to be an example of a Freemason.

"He must be temperate in his habits, avoid foul language, pay due homage to his church, be honest, and be constant and sincere in his friendships. He must be a good citizen, render what service he can to his community and to his country; be loyal and obey the law. He will zealously perform his duties as a Freemason and realize he has, likewise, duties to all his fellowmen, to assist, to befriend, and to help in time of trouble.

"Those fine brothers who attend all meetings regularly; who perform any duties assigned to them, diligently and faithfully; who always endeavor to pay their last respects to a departed brother; you meet them in their Lodge, at the District Meeting; at Grand Lodge; who are faithful to their church, active in community life; who strive to maintain the prestige of Freemasonry handed down by our ancient Brethren; whose conduct is square, footsteps level and intentions upright, these are our ideal Freemasons.

MASONRY IN ACTION

The brethren of The Dormer Lodge No. 151 instituted a Bursary in co-operation with the East Kildonan Scholarship Foundation in 1945. This Bursary is valued at \$75.00 and an award has been made each year since its inception.

The primary idea behind this community effort is that funds for the purpose should be contributed by the members of the Lodge. While provision was made that the funds of the Lodge could be used to make up any deficit it is gratifying to learn that such recourse has never been required.

In making the award each year the Bursary Committee of Dormer Lodge receives recommendation from the Foundation officials. The students thus nominated are selected on the basis of their scholastic standing and their desire to continue their studies in University or other branch of applied knowledge. There is no discrimination because of race, or religion in making the selection of the successful student.

Over the four year period in which this scholarship has been available the report covering the fortunate students is as follows: The 1945 winner is now in fifth year science and is majoring in geology; the 1946 winner is in fourth year science, majoring in mineralogy; the 1947 student is in second year Electrical Engineering; and the 1948 nominee has entered his second year Arts Course.

Here is one more example of Freemasonry in action. What greater incentive can your young teen age Canadians have than the realization that the men of their immediate community who comprise the membership in the Masonic Lodge, make it possible for one of their number to extend his or her education.

The Dormer Lodge is not a wealthy Lodge and its membership is not large. They have set in motion a fine piece of work—the work of helping to mould and build character in the youth of East Kildonan. Their example could be followed elsewhere in the Province and the brethren throughout the jurisdiction will heartily commend them for the interest and practical contribution made within their municipal boundaries.

We are certain the high school scholars in East Kildonan know there is an institution in their district known as the Masonic Lodge and equally sure they regard it in high esteem.

FROM OUR MAIL BAG

An item in a recent issue contributed by the Secretary of Neepawa Lodge seems to have started something. We don't want to be a party to a competition but our current mail indicates how carefully our readers weigh the contents of this modest periodical. Here is what reached our desk.

The Secretary of Norwood Lodge No. 119 pays tribute to the long service of a well-beloved friend of other days. Walter J. Spearman was elected to the office of Tyler at the institution of the Lodge in 1910. He was re-elected each year up to the time of his sudden death as the result of an accident in 1946.

Our good friend John Anderson, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Minnesota sends along his bit in the following; "The Treasurer of Koochiching Lodge No. 270 has just been re-elected for the fortieth consecutive year; Brother Dilley, a member of Social Lodge No. 48 at Northfield served forty-eight years as Treasurer, and I note that the Treasurer of Corner Stone Lodge No. 99, served for thirty-six years and for good measure the present Secretary of that Lodge has been re-elected for the forty-eighth year. This is not to start any argument, but, I think it might be well to let you know that Masons attain fulness of years in Minnesota also."